



# Conference on the **Future** of **Europe**

## SUMMARY RECORD

**Working Group on 'Health', Chaired by Mr Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President, European Commission**

**Friday 22 October 2021, 14:00 to 16:00**

### **1. Introductory remarks of the Chair**

This first meeting of the Working Group was held in hybrid format. The Chair, Mr Maroš Šefčovič, welcomed members and shared introductory remarks underlining the role of the Working Group to prepare the work of the Conference Plenary. He informed the members about the ideas expressed so far on the multilingual digital platform on the topic of health and about the priority topics identified in the first session of the European Citizens' Panel 3 in the field of health as well as recent EU initiatives in the health area. He emphasised that the meeting had two objectives, i.e. an exchange about the debates happening on the platform and in the European Citizens' Panels on the topic of health (see [streams](#)) and to get to know each other. The members of the working group were then invited to take the floor.

### **2. Discussion**

The speakers underlined the importance to develop good cooperation within the group and to receive input, especially from citizens. The relevance of linking the work of related Plenary working groups, e.g. between climate and health, was also underlined. The discussions concentrated around the following topics:

- There were some calls for stronger cooperation and coordination at EU level, cross-border interoperability of health systems and better EU preparedness to future health challenges. Some said that current EU cooperation on Covid-19 vaccines and Covid-19 certificates had been unprecedented but that further coordination of national policies should be discussed and strengthened.
- Some emphasised the need to take the global dimension of health into account.
- The need to increase investment in the health sector was also raised. Some speakers underlined that investment before health emergencies is key and has proven not to be effective enough during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some mentioned the interlinkages between the economy and health.
- Some speakers said that Europe's Beating Cancer Plan could be used as a model for other diseases and stressed the importance of equal treatment and knowledge sharing. Some also stressed the role of BECA (EP Special Committee on Beating Cancer).

- Other members mentioned the importance of investment in R&D and pleaded for more data exchange in the health sector. There was a suggestion that the EU should become the digital leader in healthcare. Some added that telemedicine services should be further developed.
- The challenges of healthy ageing and the increasing needs of healthcare for the elderly were also underlined.
- Some mentioned the need for an action plan for chronic diseases and rare diseases as well as for cardiovascular and neurological diseases.
- Other members stressed that health was at the heart of citizens' concerns and the need to bring the EU closer to the people. Some speakers called for more resilient health services, modern health systems and common tools and mechanisms at EU level. Some also raised the need for improving access to medicines and healthcare services for all, the introduction of minimum quality standards of health services across the EU and for better responses to future crises. Others pointed to the differences between Member States regarding access to healthcare.
- Some spoke about the EU dependence on third countries in the health area, e.g. regarding raw materials, medical devices and medicinal products, in particular during the Covid-19 pandemic and stressed the need to ensure strategic autonomy/"EU health sovereignty" in order to avoid shortages and to secure supply chains.
- The sustainability of national healthcare systems, the fragmentation of health systems in the single market, access to quality medicine, the pharmaceutical strategy, were other issues mentioned by the participants.
- One idea expressed was to set up an EU fund to create hospitals and to support research. Another was to create an EU health passport to allow EU citizens to receive suitable healthcare in all EU member states.
- Some speakers said that one should assess where the EU provides added value and where competences should be shifted to the EU level. Some others considered that the EU's role should be clarified. Others considered that Member States' competences should be preserved.
- In the area of health prevention, some highlighted that health literacy and education should start from early childhood. Raising awareness about the importance of healthy lifestyles could prevent many diseases and reduce costs. Some added that sex education, contraception and birth control also require more attention.
- Some speakers considered that mental health was a priority issue to be addressed, referring in particular to the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on mental health.

### **3. Concluding remarks of the Chair**

Concluding the meeting, the Chair thanked all members for their contributions and summarised the interventions and suggestions made. He underlined that they reflected current challenges in the health

area and the interdependence of health and a healthy natural environment, safe and healthy food, economy and climate change. He concluded by recalling that the role of the Working Group will be to give input to prepare the debates and the proposals of the Conference Plenary, by discussing the recommendations from the national and European Citizens' Panels as well as the contributions on the Multilingual Digital Platform related to health.

## ANNEX: List of members of the Working Group on Health

### CoFE Plenary Working Group on Health (48)

Chair: Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ (European Commission)

Title	First name	Last name	Component
Mr	Pascal	ARIMONT	European Parliament
Ms	Alina	BÂRGĂOANU	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Katerina	BAT'HOVÁ	Council
Ms	Linette Eleni	BLANKENSTEINER	European citizens panels
Ms	Claudette	BUTTIGIEG	National Parliaments
Ms	Anda	ČAKŠA	National Parliaments
Ms	Susanna	CECCARDI	European Parliament
Mr	Roberto	CIAMBETTI	Committee of the Regions
Mr	Alain	COHEUR	European Economic and Social Committee
Ms	Nathalie	COLIN-OESTERLÉ	European Parliament
Ms	Margarita	DE LA PISA CARRIÓN	European Parliament
Ms	Isabel	DÍAZ AYUSO	Committee of the Regions
Ms	Ines	GASMI	European citizens panels
Ms	Camille	GIRARD	European citizens panels
Ms	Anna	GOŁAWSKA	Council
Mr	Ilenia Carmela	GRECO	European citizens panels
Mr	Sebastián	GUILLEN	European citizens panels
Ms	Kinga	JOÓ	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Philippa	KARSERA	Council
Ms	Boudraa	MAGHNIA LINDA (MOUSTAKIM)	European citizens panels
Ms	Iulia	MATEI	Council
Ms	Radka	MAXOVÁ	European Parliament
Ms	Rūta	MILIŪTĖ	National Parliaments
Mr	Alin Cristian	MITUȚA	European Parliament
Ms	Dolors	MONTSERRAT	European Parliament
Mr	Nicolas	MORAVEK	European citizens panels

Mr	Renaud	MUSELIER	Local/Regional representative
Ms	Ria	OOMEN-RUIJTEN	National Parliaments
Mr	Dimitrios	PAPADIMOULIS	European Parliament
Ms	Troels de Leon	PETERSEN	European citizens panels
Mr	Mark	PLEŠKO	National citizens panels/events
Mr	Jean-François	RAPIN	National Parliaments
Mr	Ivo	RASO	European citizens panels
Ms	Michèle	RIVASI	European Parliament
Ms	Valeria	RONZITTI	Social Partners
Ms	Christa	SCHWENG	European Economic and Social Committee
Mr	Maroš	ŠEFČOVIČ	European Commission
Ms	Elisaveta	SIMEONOVA	Council
Ms	Niamh	SMYTH	National Parliaments
Ms	Paola	TAVERNA	National Parliaments
Mr	Jesús	TERUEL	European citizens panels
Mr	Zoltán	TESSELY	National Parliaments
Ms	Patrizia	TOIA	European Parliament
Ms	Kathleen	VAN BREMPT	European Parliament
Mr	Ioannis	VARDAKASTANIS	Civil Society
Ms	Anna	VIKSTRÖM	National Parliaments
Mr	Claude	WISELER	National Parliaments
Mr	Stefan	ZRINZO AZZOPARDI	Council